

*Heavens Alarm to the World.*

O R

**A S E R M O N**

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

*That fearful Sights and Signs in Heaven  
are the Presages of great Ca-  
lamities at hand.*

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By *INCREASE MATHER*; Teacher of a Church  
in Boston in New-England.

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*Jer. 6. 17. Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the  
sound of the Trumpet; but they said, We will not hearken.*

*Joc. 2. 30, 31. I will shew Wonders in the heavens, and in the  
earth, bloud and fire and pillars of smoke. The Sun shall be  
turned into darkness, and the moon into bloud, before the  
great and the terrible day of the Lord come.*

*Rev. 8. 10. And the third Angel sounded, and there fell a great star  
from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the  
third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.*

*Rev. 11. 14. The second woe is past, behold, the third woe cometh  
quickly.*

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BOSTON; Printed by John Foster. 1681.

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## TO THE READER.

**C**ONCERNING those admirable and amazing works of God, which are by us called *Comets*, as under a *physical* and *mathematical* Consideration, there are many that have published their Sentiments, and some to good purpose and edification. The Scope of the ensuing discourse, is only, (that being most proper for one under my circumstances) to make a *Theological* Improvement thereof. There are that do propound this enquiry, *How many Comets hath the world taken notice of since the first Creation?* which is indeed a Question that no mortal living is able to give a full and certain answer unto. It is true that sundry learned and worthy Writers, (especially *Lavater* and *Alsted*) have attempted to give us the History of Comets, nor hath their labour been wholly in vain or unprofitable, though it be not possible to give an account of all of them. We do not read of above eleven *Blazing Stars*, in those Ages (for about four thousand years) that were before the Incarnation of the Son of God: doubtless there were more; but the Records of those times are very imperfect, so that we cannot say, when they appeared, or by whom observed. The number of *Comets* seen these last 1680. years, is judged to be about 158; yet may it justly be questioned whether there have been so many, inasmuch as diverse appearances of the same *Comet* have been set down by Historians as if they had been so many distinct Comets. Such *Stars* (for so rather than *Meteors* have the Observations of later times evinced them to be) have ever been accounted *Ominous Presages* of great mutations and miseries coming upon the world. So did the wise men amongst the Gentiles of old (a) their Orators, Poets, Philosophers ever esteem of them. And the observation hath been sadly verified, by the experience of latter Ages; consonant to the holy Scriptures of Truth, where (both in the old Testament and in the New) Prodigious Sights and Signs in the heavens are mentioned as the Presages of great Calamities. Some object that after the blazing Star, Anno 1097. a very fertile prosperous year followed, but they forget that the next year a direful Plague raged in the world. Others object that *Wick-*

(a) *Ab ultima antiquitatis memoris notatum est Cometam semper calamitatem praenuncius fuisse. Cicero de nat. Deor. Lib. 2.*

*Diri toties arsere Cometae Virg.*

*Et terris nunquam spectaculum impare Cometae. Claudian.*

*Quando nate Cometa sanguine lugubre rubent.*

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*liffs* and *Luthers* Reformatiōns, had Comets to precede them. But (to say nothing of the Warrs and fatal changes which in those dayes hapned in diverse parts of the world) two or three exceptions doe not invalidate the truth of a general Assertion. If such signs are commonly Presages of fore Calamities, that enough to awaken men out of their lethargies, though now and then, once in an hundred times it should happen to be otherwise, which yet remains to be demonstrated. As for their notion who think that Comets are signs that the light of the Gospel shall be further dispersed in the world, or that they portend mercy to the Church, and Judgement to others only; it is to be wished that there were a solid foundation for such a conceipt: But alas! Divisions amongst the Lords professing People themselves, and great Persecutions have oftentimes been the fatal consequents of such portentous signs. And if publick calamities come upon the world, it is not to be expected but that the Lords People, whilst they are mixed amongst others, (and too much partaking with them in their sins) living in an evil world, will have their share therein. It hath ever been so, and is ever like to be so, until the sign of the Son of Man shall appear.

As for that *Blazing Star*, which hath occasioned this present Discourse, it was a terrible sight indeed, especially about the middle of December last, the stream of such a stupendous magnitude, as that no man now living ever beheld the like. That in the year 1618. was looked upon as very prodigious, (b) yet the radiant Locks of it were not extended above 45. degrees in length, whereas this was about 60. degrees. Yet I cannot say there never was any so dismal since the world began, for I have read of diverse po less fearful. *Seneca* (c) speaketh of a Comet whose magnitude was equal with that of the Sun: and of another that prodigiously diffused it self over the *Phaethon*; and of one that extended from *Helice* to *Buris*. That which appeared Anno Christi 1452. (d) was above 50 degrees in length. Writers speak of some blazing Stars that have been attended with a much longer stream. Nevertheless, one so fearful to behold as this, hath rarely been known: and without controversie some great thing is portended thereby. I see little reason to conclude, that it is an Omen of happy dayes to the world, until God hath made way for mercy by great Judgements. Especially considering, that we are fallen into the dregs of time, wherein the dayes must and shall be perillous. It was long since (e) conjectured, that in the Ages more immediately preceding the day of Judgement, Comets and other fearful sights should be more frequent then formerly, as intimations of the great and amazing Resolutions in those Ages to be accomplished. It will not be long before the second Wo Trümpet hath done its work, and then the third Wo will come quickly. The Lord grant that we may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming.

The learned and judicious *Hospinian* (f) writes that Anno 729. there was a Comet seen first in the east, in the morning, & after in the west in the

(b) *History of great Britain*, p. 128.

*Clark's Examp.* Vol. 2. p. 256.

(c) *Nat. Quest.* C. 15. 16.

(d) *Testis Nauclero*.

(e) *Keckerm.* *Phys. libri de Cometis*. p. mibi 367. *Ma. in de ex- sitione Mundi*. l. 3. c. 10.

(f) *De Origine scptorum*. p. 59.

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the evening (just as with our present blazing Star) *Quasi Orienti simul & Occidentis magni alicujus mali Prasagi*. We have cause to fear that this Comes so appearing doth preiudge & portend great Calamities both to the East & the West, h.e. to the world in *General*. That some notable day of the Lord is at hand, when such Signs appear, we may believe: hence are they called (g) *Prodigia a Praesentendis*, because they show beforehand that *something Remarkable is a coming*. Further then this I would not goe about to *determine*; only we may modestly *conjecture* as to particular events like to happen. I have ever thought it unwarrantable, for men, not acted by an extraordinary Spirit, to make particular and positive determinations concerning the Judgements (or the Persons eminently concerned therein) by such Prodigies menaced. The great *Melancthon* hath been thought (by some great (b) Authors) to proceed something too far in applications of this nature. *Peuceirus* (*Melancthon's son in law*) expresseth himself more warily, in his *Teratoscopia*, or Discourse about *Divination from fearful Sights*. Yet he affirms that whenever great changes in the world have been near, prodigious Sights have been the forerunners thereof; and that unusual Sights are seldom or never known to have hapned without great and miserable changes attending them. Only it is possible for particular Persons and places through faith in Christ, and in a way of humble Repentance, to obtain a lengthening out of their tranquility. The Gentiles of old (i) when they beheld *fearfull Sights in Heaven*, would presently betake themselves to their Prayers, & piacular Sacrifices, (in imitation of whom idolatrous Papists have been wont in like cases to goe to their Reliques, Amulets, Processions &c.) that so evils *Ominated* thereby, might (if possible) be averted. And shall not Professors of the true Religion, be awakened by such awful works of God, to goe unto Jesus Christ (our only Sacrifice) and to pray earnestly that impending wrath may be removed, and the mercy of heaven obtained? Shall we not be humbled, as for other sins, so for that, of not hearkning to his Word? the contempt whereof provoketh him to speak by *fearful Sights and Signs from heaven*, which seems to be the (k) meaning of that Scripture, *Act. 2. 19*. The Lord is many wayes calling upon men, to repent, and pray, and get into the Ark before the flood come. Iudee we should not be dismayed at the Signs of heaven, nevertheless (as that Emperor said) *We ought to fear that God who hath made this blazing Star*. Surely, we have cause to speak, as sometimes the Psalmist did, my flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgements.

(f) *N. Melchior  
Fun Orat Par.  
1. p. 425.*

(b) *Voetius in  
is Diss. & Sign.*

(i) *Alexand. ab  
Alexand. L. 5.  
c. 27.  
Calim Rodogi.  
l. 3. c. 27.*

(k) *Strigelius  
& Tossanus ad  
Locum.*

*Boston N. E. 12. Moneth,*

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1680.

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INCREASE MATHER:

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Luk. 21. 11. --- *Fearful Signs and great Signs shall there be from Heaven.*

**T**HE Lord Jesus Christ, having told his Disciples that great Calamities were hastning upon Jerusalem, and upon the Jewish Nation; they enquire when those things should come to pass, and what Signs should precede and preface the Judgements predicted. This we see in the 7th. verse of this Chapter, *They asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what Sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?* In answer unto which enquiry, the Lord Christ doth in this context mention several things, some of which were to be more remote, and others more immediate Signs of that miserable Destruction, which the sacred and unerring lips of Christ had foretold. 1. False Christs would arise, v. 8. *Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, &c.* The Jews had rejected the true Messiah, therefore God would punish them with false Christs, as an intimation that the dayes of vengeance were coming upon the Nation for that sin of theirs. The Apostle John (Christ's beloved Disciple) doth imitate his Master in mentioning the same thing as a sign that the Jewish world was near unto its end, 1 Joh. 2. 18. *There are many Antichrists (a) (a) See Mede's* &c. false Christs, such as come in Christ's Name, &c. that pretended unto his Office, Dignity and Authority, and thereby *1774 p. 318.* (saith the Apostle) *we know that it is the last time,* sc. the Jewish State both Civil and Ecclesiastical, was come unto the last hour. The Period of the Jewish world was at hand. And the Historyes of those times speak of one *Theudas* and others, that

that pretended to be Christs, and that the river Jordan should give way to them as once it did to Joshuah, so that a multitude of silly Jews were perswaded and seduced to follow them, unto their own destruction. 2. Another Sign mentrioned, is, that of Wars and Commotions, v. 9. *When ye shall hear of wars and commotions be not terrified, for the se things must first come to pass, but the end is not by and by.* This may be understood of those intestine Wars and Commotions which hapned in the land of Judea. The Galileans took up arms against the Samaritans. At (b) one time, in a mutiny there were twenty thousand slain. These were Commotions which caused a great noise and consternation amongst men (especially amongst those of the Jewish Nation) in those dayes. Hence that which is by Luke expressed by *Wars and Commotions*, is by Mark called *Troubles*, and by Matthew, *Wars and rumors of Wars*. And these things hapned about twenty years before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and fatal overthrow of the Jewish Nation, therefore was it said, *the end is not by and by.* 3. Another Sign is that mentioned in the 10th. v. *Nation shall rise up against nation, & Kingdom against Kingdom, (c)* So indeed it came to pass when the Jewish Nation rose up against the Romane Nation, & their neighbouring Nations, Syrians, Samaritans &c. rose against them. In those dayes the land of Judea was divided into several Provinces, which did bear the names of *Kingdoms*, and the chief Governours of them are according to the Hebrew style called *Kings*, being the Vice-Royes which the Romane Emperors did substitute to be over those places. See 1 King. 22. 47. Hence we read of King Herod, King Agrippa &c. (d) Now the People of these Provinces were set one against another, therefore it is said *Kingdoms shall rise up against Kingdoms.* All those troubles were forerunners & intimations of the fatal calamity a coming, & did help to make way thereunto. 4. There were to be great Earthquakes in diverse places. In the beginning of this verse. Such things are usually signs of divine Anger, and so portentous of great changes and calamities. The intimations of State-quakes, yet of Nation-quakes. Historians speak of very tremendous Earthquakes, which

Joseph; Antiq.  
L. 20. C. 4. §.  
de Bello Jud.  
l. 2 c. 11.

(c) v. Joseph.  
de Bello Jud.  
l. 2. c. 19, 20,  
21.

(d) Grotius &  
Lucas Bru-  
genis in Mat.  
24. 7.



which hapned in diverse places (c) whereby several famous Cities perished, not long before Jerusalem was destroyed. 5. *Famines*. Probably that Prediction, doth respect the same Famine which Agabus prophesied of, Act. 11.28. under which the land of Judea suffered deeply. Whence it was that the Apostle Paul was very solicitous to obtain some relief for the Christian Jews then at Jerusalem. 6. *Pestilences*. These two Judgements, (*Li-moi kai Loimoi* as in the Greek it is elegantly expressed) of *Famine* and *Pestilence*, doe often goe together, the latter following at the heels of the former, and being occasioned thereby. 7. *Fearful Sights and great Signs in Heaven*: which are the words now before us to consider of. *Fearful Sights*, Gr. [*phobetra*] *Terriculamenta*. Such Sights as strike a terror into the hearts of men that are the Spectators of them. *Signs from Heaven*, viz. *Prodigious Signs*. These things are mentioned as the more immediate Presages of those miseries that were coming upon Jerusalem, with the whole Jewish Nation.

Doct. *That Prodigious awfull Sights and Signs in Heaven, are oftentimes, the Presages of great Calamity coming upon the World*. For the further clearing of this Doctrine, three things may be enquired into. 1. What sights and signs are the Presages of Calamity? 2. How it doth appear that they are so? 3. What Calamities such Signs doe commonly preface?

Q 1. *What Sights & Signs in heaven are Presages of Calamity?* A. 1. There are signs in the starry heaven. The great God, when he made the World, placed the Stars in heaven, to be for signs as to events that in the ordinary course of nature should come to pass. Gen. 1.14. God said, *Let there be light in the Firmament of heaven, and let them be for Signs*. They are for Signs of heat and cold, wet and dry seasons, and the like. Hence the Lord spake to Job as in Ch. 38.31. *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?* The *Pleiades* are the same with those which men call

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the

(c) Sex circiter annos, ante urbem excidium, tres Asia clarissimas urbes Terra motu everfas esse, testatur Orolius. l. 7.

Tacitus scribit sub Tiberio Nerone, duodecim civitates in Asia terra motu collapsas esse. Ac denno in quinto eius regni anno, predecim urbes Terra motu cecidisse.

v. Bertram. in Mat. 24. 7.

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the seven stars. When the Sun is in that Constellation with the Pleiades, it hath a great power and influence upon the earth. It is Spring timethen. As for *Orion* (f) it is a winter Constellation, causing cold, whereby the pores of the earth are bound. It binds the earth from bearing fruit, and as it were binds the hands of men from labour in their particular callings. When that Constellation appears in the evening (as it doth in the ninth moneth) tis a sign that the earth shall be bound as hath been expressed. Yea, and tis a sign that storms and tempestuous seasons are to be expected. Therefore was it by the Poet called *Nimbusu Orion*. And hence the stars are called by the name of *The Signs of heaven*, Jer. 10.2. *Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven*. Which words may well be understood concerning the stars and Constellations in the heavens. (g) For the Heathen, the Chaldeans especially (amongst whom the Jews were then going to dwell, superstitiously imagin'd that the stars were Rulers of the world, and did therefore stand in fear of them and worship them, which heathenish Idolatry the Lord doth caution and charge his people against. The stars of heaven are for natural signs, Their motions & appearances are significations that such and such things, will according to that course of nature which God hath settled, come to pass in the world. There are also extraordinary Stars, sometimes appearing in the heavens. God in his Providence doth so order as that so metimes *Blazing Stars* are seen in heaven. Such stars are called *Comets*, from the stream like long hair which useth to attend them. Such a star is prodigious, and a fearful sight. And of this may the words of the Text be understood. The Jewish (h) Historian reports, that not long before the destruction of Jerusalem, there was a *Blazing star* in form of a Sword, which seemed to impend over the City, for a year together: this now was a *fearful sight, and a great sign from heaven*.

2. There are fearful sights & signs appearing in the Air, sometimes in the lower heaven. which we move and breathe in. Prodigious Meteors are sometimes seen there. And  
strange

(f) See Mr. Caryl on Job. 38.31.

(g) Ita. locum interpretatur A. Solomon Jarchi, & ex ill. Lyranus.

Voetius Disp. 1. par. 2. p. 923.

(h) Warrs of Jews, l. 7 c. 12

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Strange Appearances, which are either seen or heard speaking. Of these fearful sights and signs is the Text likewise to be interpreted. - *Josephus* relates, that before the Romane Army destroyed Jerusalem, there was seen in the air, iron Chariots and Souldiers in battle array; and in the night time, a great light appeared in the temple, for half an hour together; with as much brightness as if it had been noon day, and a voice was heard saying, *Let us be gone from hence.* ibidem.

*Qu. 2. How doth it appear that such fearful Sights are Presages of Calamities coming upon the World?*

*Ans. 1.* The Scripture is clear for this. The Text before us doth expressly declare no less. And the Prophet Joel foretelling the same Calamities which this text hath reference unto, saith also, that prodigious signs in heaven should preface and portend them. *Joel 2.30,31. I will shew Wonders in the heaven.* Truly, Blazing Stars are Wonders in the heaven. *And in the earth blood and fire and pillars of smoke --- before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.* When Jerusalem was destroyed & the Jewish State dissolved, that was a great & notable day of the Lord, a Type of the great day of Judgement. Wonders, even prodigious and amazing signs should precede it. A very learned (i) and judicious Interpreter, conceiveth, that the Hebrews of old did use to call Comets or blazing stars by that name of *A Pillar of smoke*, because sometimes they appear like pillars of smoke, and that therefore when it is said, there shall be Pillars of smoke before the terrible day of the Lord, the true meaning and intendment of those expressions, is, that Comets should precede and preface the miseries coming upon the Jewish Nation. Yea, the Scripture informs us, that *fearful sights and signs in heaven* shall precede the great and general day of Judgement as presages thereof, *Luk 21.25. There shall be signs in the stars:* meaning that such things should be observed among the stars in heaven, as would be a sign that Christs coming to judge the world did approach. Wherefore in *ver.28.* it is said, *when these things come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.* The day of Judgement is a day of Re-

(i) *Medo Dp. course 6, p. 37.*

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demption, and is so called in other Scriptures, Ephes. 4. 30. Then shall the bodies of the Saints be redeemed from the power of the grave, and both bodies and souls redeemed from all evils of sin and of suffering. Rom. 8. 23. 1 Cor. 1. 30. At the Resurrection in the last day, will the great Redemption be to the Saints of God, and the greatest miseries to the wicked that ever were thought of. And signs in heaven shall precede them. And hence it is, that *fearfull Sights* are called *Signs* in the Scripture, it is partly on this account, in that they are *Signs* that the Lord is coming forth out of his holy habitation, to punish the world for their iniquities.

2. The experience of many Ages doth bear witness unto the truth of this Doctrine. If the Scripture were silent about this matter, the experience both of former and of later Ages doth sufficiently and sadly confirm the truth in hand. Hence

(k) *Cum Deus puniturus sit gentem vel urbem, Prodigia id primum solet significare, Hierod. l. 6. Lege Melchioris Junii Orat. Par. l. p. 485.*

(l) *Conrados Lycosthenes Librum edidit in quo omnia castigata Prodigia, quae ab exordio mundi observata sunt.*

Zanch. *de natura Dei*, p. 414.

an (k) heathen Writer could say, *If God be about to punish a City or a Nation, he is wont first to give warning of it by Prodiges*, by Signs from heaven. And commonly it is so, that when stupendous Signs goe before, stupendous Judgements follow after. Some (l) have written large Volumes concerning the fearfull Sights which have at several times and places been observed in the world, and the Judgements and miseries which have followed.

3. Many times such fearful Sights are tokens of Gods anger; which is another reason why they are called *Signs*, as being Signs of the Anger of God. *Signs* that flaming vengeance is kindled and burning in heaven against a sinful World. Now when God is angry then publick Judgements come, and testimonies of Divine Displeasure. *Personal* afflictions are not alwayes evidences of Gods anger, as we see in *Job*; but publick Judgements are ever wont to be so. 'Tis thought that the ninetyeth Psalm was penned by Moses on occasion of a publick Judgement, the Plague which broke in upon the Children of Israel and swept away many thousands of them: and (saith he) *we are consumed by thine anger, and by*

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thy wrath are we troubled, v. 7. So that if publick Judgements come, God is angry, his wrath kindled; he doth by them testify and pour down his righteous displeasure from Heaven. Inasmuch then as fearful Sights are Tokens of Gods anger, they are Prefages of great and publick Calamities. As the Rainbow (though a natural Sign) is a token of divine Favour, so are prodigious Sights, tokens of Divine Anger.

4. These tearful Sights are many times Prefages of those things which make way for great changes and Calamities to come upon the world. They are oftentimes (Blazing Stars

(m) in a more especial manner are so) the Prefages of the death of great, yea, and of worthy men. Is not the fatal downfall of *Augustulus* (the last Romane Emperor) in the Scripture emblematically set forth, by that of a *Blazing Star* falling to the ground? Rev. 8. 10. *There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a Lamp, (k) It is conceived, that the ruin of Augustulus, dethroned by Odoacer the Herulian*

(m) *Damasce. L. 2. c. 6.*

*Idor, L. 3. Elymal*

*Crinemq; timendi, Syderis et terris mutentem Regna Cometae* Lucan. Anno 1471, ardet Cometa. Hoc anno multi Principes moriuntur. Sic Anno 1477, multi Principes obierunt Alsted.

was signified by those words, and that he is resembled to that sort of *Comets*, which is called *Lampadius*. And when there is a star burning and blazing in heaven, commonly it proveth fatal to some *Augustulus*, whence great changes and miseries ensue. Yea the death of Worthy (as well as great) Personages, is sometimes portended by such Signs. A little before great *Constantine's* death, a blazing Star appeared, and infinite miseries followed. In the Year (e) 1556. a Comet (then vulgarly called a *fiery Barfom*) was seen, and soon after, many learned, useful, worthy men dyed; whose death was an unspeakable loss and misery to the places where they had lived.

(n) *Mede in Apoc 8. 10.*

(o) *Alsted*

*Chronol. c. 49.*

*ubi de Cometis.*

*See Spornwoods*

*Hist of Scott.*

*p. 94.*

Quest. 3. *What Calamities doe such tearfull sights & signs in heaven Prefage?*

A. We must not be particular & positive in interpretations of things of this nature. When a fearfull sight appears in heaven which the whole world cannot but take notice of, now to make a particular and absolute determination, (p) that

(p) *v. Voet, in*

*Disp. de Signis*

*p. 19, 230.*

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such a place, or such a person, such a Judgement is certainly intended thereby, is too much boldness. In general, we may safely say, that there is just cause to expect; that great calamities are at hand, but what persons or places shall more eminently fall under those Judgements, is not for us to determine, but we must leave that with God, who best knows what himself intends to do.

This being premised, we proceed in answering the enquiry before us.

1. Sometimes such signs are Prefages of great Persecutions coming upon the Church of God. The Lord in mercy to his People giveth them such warnings, that so they may prepare for what's a coming, or make hast to enter into the chambers of safety, as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast. *Nero's* bloody Persecution had a *Blazing Star* to precede it. The same is true concerning the *Arrian* Heresy and Persecution; that flood spoken of in the *Revelation*, which the Dragon cast out of his mouth, and whereby the woman, the Church, fled into the wilderness, was in eminent danger of being swallowed up and devoured. *Rev. 12. 15.*

2. Sometimes such Signs in heaven are prefages of miserable Dearth and Scarcity. That blazing Star impending over Jerusalem, which the text hath reference unto, was attended with a terrible Famine, whereby multi-

(4) In the years after Christ 876. 948. 964. there were blazing stars seen prefaging Famines and other Judgements. In Annis 674. 675. 676. Comets appeared, and sore Droughts followed. In some Countries it rained not for 3 years together. The like miseries followed the Comet Anno 1477. In Annis 594. 1527. 1542. Comets were seen, and Armies of Locusts followed, devouring the fruits of the earth.

tudes perished. (9) And therefore such signs are frequently portentous of those Judgements which cause want and scarcity, *v.g.* of sore Droughts and Blasts, and the multiplication of noxious creatures that destroy the fruits of the earth. All which particulars I could confirm unto you, by approved History, which declareth how they have all been prefaged by *blazing Stars* in heaven.

3. Lamentable Deaths and destructions amongst men, have been oftentimes prefaged by such sights in heaven. Sudden and amazing ru-

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ins by (r) *Earth-quakes*, by *Inundations*, by *Fires*, and the like awfull visitations, have been thereby portended. Especially destructions by mortal and contagious Diseases. That strange disease known by the name of *Sudor Anglicanus*, which in a peculiar manner pursued those of the English Nation, even when in strange lands, whence they were dreaded in all places where they came, there was a *blazing Star* that did precede it. Especially that which is of all diseases miserable mortals are subject unto, the most terrible, I mean the plague of *Pestilence*, (s) it is frequently thus presaged. Such sights are *Heavens Alarm* to a sinfull World, to give notice that God hath bent his Bow, and made his Arrows ready, and that if Sinners turn not, the arrows of *Pestilence* and *Death* shall fall down upon them speedily. This might be confirmed by a multitude of instances, but it needs not. Our own experience is enough. We cannot but remember the *Blazing Star* that was seen but 16 years agoe & a terrible Plague followed, so that in our own nation, near upon an hundred thousand were swept away in one City, and in one year. And it is reported that immediately after that great blazing Star which appeared above threescore years ago, God sent the Plague

(r) amongst the Natives in this land, which swept them away in such multitudes, as that the living were not enough to bury the dead. So did the Lord cast out the Heathen before this his People, that the way might thereby be prepared unto our more peaceable settlement here. The Lord in mercy grant, that we may never by becoming like unto the Heathen in profaneness and irreligion, provoke him to doe unto us, as he hath done unto them.

4. Such fearful sights and signs in heaven are usual presages of War among the Nations, and so of those Devastations

(r) In the years 66, 78, 79, & 668. Comets appeared, after which terrible Earthquakes hapned in many places.

Annis 377, 912, 1330, there were blazing stars appearing and inundations followed in diverse places. Soon after the Comet An. 884. the famous city of *Triers* was burnt to the ground.

*Allied. ubi supra.*

*Memorable suis Portentum Terra motus An. 1618. quando rubra montis, quatuor Oppidum Pfulium, et Vicum Schillem cum 900 hominibus oppressa.*

(s) Anno 1457. Cometa quem nigram appellabant, apparet, secuta est Pestis distrior.

Anno 1472. Duo Cometa. Pestis adeo serviti, ut Cognati proximi deicerent suos. idem eodem Libro.

Anno 1606. Cometa, quem Pestis exceptis, ut vivi cum mortuis sepelirentur, multa Oppida plane cinxerunt.

(s) See Mr. Gorges Description of New-England. p. 27.

(u) *De illi mala  
signa Cometa.  
Tibull.*

*Stella reit cehis  
gladii mortali-  
um index.  
Sibyll. Orac.  
lib. 3.*

and Desolations which the sword leaveth behind it. Sometimes Prodigyes on the earth doe betoken war and bloodshed, 2 Kin. 3. 22. And signs in heaven doe no less. Thus in my Text, the Romane Sword, which made the Jewish nation desolate, (according to Daniels Prophecy, ch. 9. 27.) was portended by a fearfull blazing Star in heaven. (u) And when *Alaricus* the Goth made such a terrible irruption upon the Romane Empire, like a storm of hail and fire and blood, Rev. 8. 7. *blazing Stars* in heaven preceded those calamities. When *Attila*, who they say, called himself *Flagellum Dei*, Gods Whip, to scourge the world for their wickedness, when he was armed to be the Executioner of divine Vengeance upon the earth, destroying Cities, and laying Nations wast before him, *blazing Stars* were seen preceding and portending those miserable times. So when the *Saracens* (the first wo trumpet) and the *Turks* (the second wo trumpet, prophesied of in the Revelation) were let loose upon the apostate christian world, *blazing Stars*, and *fearfull sights in heaven* did precede those woful dayes. And are there not some alive, and here before the Lord this day, that can remember the *blazing star* which appeared in the 9th. and in the 10th. months, in the year 1618. and the next year began that unhappy War in Germany, which proved so fatal to the Protestant interest there.

Thus have we seen what Judgements and Calamities, *fearful Sights in heaven* are commonly the prefaces of. As for that sign in heaven now appearing, (which hath occasioned me to speak this word at this time) what Calamities may be portended thereby, which of the Judgements mentioned, or whether all of them be not thereby prefiged, I shall not say, but leave it unto God and time to discover. Only in general, we have cause to fear, that sweeping Judgements are thereby signified; that the Lord is coming down from heaven with a long Beesome of destruction which shall sweep away a world of Sinners before it.

I Conclude with a word of *Application*. Nor would I speak any thing but the words of truth and soberness, as becometh a Messenger of Christ to doe, when speaking in his Name.

U S E.



*Heavens Alarm to the World.*

31

**USE,** Let us hence be exhorted to approve our selves as those that are under the solemn awfull warnings of God ought to doe. I need not say, (for every one knoweth it) that there is a fearful sight and sign appearing in the heavens. Such a formidable *Blazing Star*, as that the like hath seldom been observed. It concerns us then, to hearken to the voice of the Lord therein, who by such tremendous sights is speaking awfully to the children of men. Hear them *Heavens Alarm* this day. You will say, But what should we now doe? *What doth the Lord expect from us, when there are such dreadful Portents of evils coming upon the world?*

*Ans. 1.* It now concerns us to be awakened out of all security. That's one of Gods ends, this declared and) in causing such fearful sights to be taken notice of, that so he might awaken a secure sleeping World. And indeed, the Lord manifests his goodness and compassion towards finall Creatures therein. It was a pious speech of that (w) *Emper*or, who being somewhat terrified at the sight of a *Blazing Star*; said to those about him; *Let us admire the Clemency of that God, who before he smites us, causeth such signs in heaven, that so he might awaken us out of our security.* O let us beware of crying Peace, Peace, when the day of

(w) *Eius clementiam laudare  
tenemus, qui nossem thermam,  
turbas edomare dignatur indi-  
ciis. Carolus magnus, vel  
ut alii volunt, Ludovicus 1.  
Caroli magni filius.*

destruction is at hand? O foolishness of sleeping and dreaming of nothing but worldly Prosperity at such a time as this. When the Lord Jesus Christ had told his Disciples, that calamitous times were a coming, and mentioned the Signs and presages thereof, he bids them *watch therefore.* Luk. 21. 36. Wherefore let us not please our selves, with imagining that such fearful sights, are signs of mercy only, and not of Judgement. The contrary unto which opinion, hath been confirmed by more then an hundred instances (x) Men are exceeding apt to interpret such things in a way of favour to themselves, when nothing less is intended thereby. So when these *fearful sights and Signs in heaven* which my Text speaketh of, were seen at Jerusalem,

(x) *Consulatur Heidefeld, Spheer  
Philosoph p. 1087.  
Universali experientia, & ho-  
minum consensu, praedictatum  
est, Comitus magnas mutatio-  
nes portendere. Voet. Diss. de  
Signis. p. 929.*

C

the

(7) See *Clarke's*  
*Martyrology*. p.  
311 &c.

(2) Testante  
Suetonio.

the Jews did interpret them as good *Omens* to themselves, and as ominous of destruction to their enemies. The Prodigies in *Germany* (7) were looked upon by the Protestants as signs of deliverance unto them, and of destruction to their enemies. But alas! the event was quite otherwise. And let us not make ourselves secure, by saying or thinking, that the Lord, by such *fearful sights* speaks to *others only*, and not unto us. As *Vespasian* (the Emperor) when (2) there was a long hairy Comet seen, he did but deride at it, and make a Joke of it, saying, That it concerned the *Parthians* that wore long hair, and not him, who was bald, but within a year, *Vespasian* himself, (and not the *Parthians*) dyed. Such *fearful sights* are usually signs that those Judgements which are (as *Tertullian* speaks) *Tou-ssura humani generis*, Gods sharp Razors on mankind, whereby he doth Poll; his Sythe, whereby he doth shear down multitudes of sinful creatures, doe draw near, in which respect there is no doubt to be made of it; but that God by this *blazing star*, is speaking to other places, and not to *New-England* only. And it may be, he is declaring to that Generation of hairy Scalps, who go on still in their trespasses, that the day of their calamity is at hand, and that the things which shall come upon them make hast. A *strange sight* doth botoken *strange punishment* coming upon those that have bin *prodigious* workers of iniquity. Yet let not us promise to our selves nothing but prosperity, in the doleful and the bitter day, when there shall be Lamentation generally. I am perswaded, that the floods of great water are coming. I am perswaded, that God is about to open the windows of heaven, and to pour down the Cataracts of his wrath, ere this Generation (wherein Atheism and Profaneness are come to such a prodigious height) I say, ere this Generation is passed away. But what reason have we to think that no drops of the fatal storm shall come near to us? If we so conclude, we may provoke the Lord to say, *The Sinners of my People shall dye by the sword, who say the evil shall not overtake us nor prevent us.* To be awakened out of security, and tremblingly to wait for the good pleasure of God, whatever it may be, is the most likely way to find rest in the.

*Heavens Alarm to the World.*

11

the day of Trouble. So did the Prophet find it, Hab. 3. 16. *when I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble.* When the thundring voice of Judgement was heard, his heart trembled at it, so did he find rest in the day of trouble.

2. *This should put us upon preparing for another day of Trouble.* And this should we do the rather, since the changes portended by this *Comet*, are like to come speedily as well as certainly. Joseph said to Pharaoh, *For that the dream is doubled, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.* Gen. 41. 32. Doth not the doubled appearance of this fearful sight in the heavens speak as much? Let us then prepare for trouble. We should not only expect it, but so expect it, as to prepare for it. Certainly we have reason so to do. If there had been no *Blazing Star*, yet upon other accounts, we have cause to expect and prepare for another day of Trouble, which seems to be hastning upon thee O *New-England*, and upon thee O *Boston*. The Sins which are amongst us, are surer and blacker signs of Judgement then any signs in heaven, that we may think of. I say the sins, the Pride, the Profaneness, the worldliness, the general security and iniquity that prevaieth amongst us. Especially considering how little good all former Judgements and Dispensations have done upon us. What fiery Desolations hath the Lord made amongst us? The Lord hath bin roaring out of Sion. Such roaring Judgements, have bin amongst us, as that the report of them hath been heard afar off. Sword, Death, and Fire. But, (alas O Lord God) may it not be said concerning the generality of men, they return not unto him that hath bin smiting of them? They are the same since the War, since the Small Pox, since the Fires, that they were before. Ah! what will come next? We have cause to expect, and it will be our wisdom to prepare for another day of Trouble seven times greater then the former. It grieveth me to speak thus, but I cannot forbear. I feel that the word of the Lord is like a fire in a mans bones, and it will break out. The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesie? And now

know for certain, that if destroying Judgements and Death overtake any in their sins, and sweep them away to Hell, their blood shall be upon their own heads. For the Lord hath fired his Beacon in the heavens, among the stars of God there; the fearful sight is not yet out of sight. The Warning piece in heaven is going off, now then if the Lord discharge his Murdering pieces from on high, and men be found in their sins unfit for death, their blood shall be upon them. They had warning given them that the Sword was a coming: Lo, the Lord himself gave them the warning, but they would not take warning, their blood shall be upon them. Moreover, if troubles should not come, yet it will be wisdom to prepare for them. If the Lord, after he hath sent his Angel to stand with a drawn sword over Jerusalem, should be entreated to spare us, yet it will never doe us hurt to prepare for the most deadly arrows of affliction, that may light upon us, whilst in this Vale of tears.

3. *We should doe what in our eyes to divert those Judgements which seem to be impending and blazing over our heads.* This word of comfort, I may safely speak, the Lords threatnings are not absolute, but conditional. So far as we in these ends of the earth, these goings down of the Sun, are spoken unto, by this sign in the heavens, it is possible we may escape the evils threatned thereby, if we duely hearken to the voice of God therein. Jer. 18. 7, 8. *At what time I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdome, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evill that I thought to doe unto them.* So that when desolating Judgements are threatned either by the word, or by the awfull works of God, those denunciations of wrath are not absolute but conditional. If Repentance intervene, the evils which otherwise must be looked for, may be diverted. See therefore Jer 36. 3, 7. *It may be the house of Judah will hear all the evill which I purpose to doe unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way.* Ay, a general Repentance is that which will doe, if every man turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

*It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord &c.* This is that which the Lord would have; therefore he saith, He stir up the spirit of my Ministers and Ambassadors, that they shall declare and denounce my Judgements against a sinful Generation. *It may be they will hear.* And he speak by awful Signs from heaven that may be as Heralds to proclaim wrath and woe to the world, *It may be they will hear,* and then shall their sins be forgiven. You will say, *But what shall we do that so the Judgements which are blazing over us may be diverted from us?* *Ans.* Pray and cry mightily to heaven. For this let every one that is godly pray unto the Lord in a time wherein he may be found, and before the floods of great waters come nigh unto us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having warned his disciples of approaching calamities, he concludeth with an exhortation unto prayer, *Luk. 21. 36. Pray always,* that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass. Prayer may doe much towards the averting of wrathful Judgements and desolations. When the Lord threatened to bring Famine and destruction upon his People, *Amos* fell to praying, and God said *This shall not be,* this Judgement and threatened desolation shall not be, *Amos 7. 3, 6.* O then, let us deprecate impending Judgements. Doe we see the sword blazing over us? Let it put us upon crying to God that that Judgement may be diverted, and not return upon us again so speedily. Doe we see the arrows of Pestilence and Death blazing over us? Oh! pray that the destroying Angel may not be sent to walk in darkness, and to waste at noon day. Doth God threaten our very heavens? O pray unto him that he would not take away Stars and send Comets to succeed them. Pray that the Lord Jesus who holds the Stars in his right hand, may continue those in the Firmament of his Churches (the heaven which his own hand hath planted) who are indeed Stars, willing to impart the light which they have received from Christ unto his People; and that wandering Stars, blazing stars, seducing spirits may never come in their room. I am not without fear, that this will at last be the Judgement of God upon New-England, and upon these Churches.

Pray that it may never be. And our *Supplications* should be attended with deep *Humiliation*, *Zeph. 2. 2, 3. Gather your selves together*, h.e. come before the Lord in a way of publick solemn Humiliation, *before the decree*, i.e. the Judgement written and threatned, *bring forth, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lords anger come upon you: seek the Lord. ... It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lords anger.* Thus then should we doe, in this day, when there are such dark & angry clouds hanging over our heads, & we know not how soon they may break upon us. And truly, if our *Lectures*, were, some of them, turned into dayes of Prayer, at such a time as this, it is no more then what there is cause for. And there is one thing more, that should in special be remembred by us; a thing that hath been much talked of, but little hath been done in it, that is *Reformation! Reformation!* When the Prophet *Jonah* was sent of God to preach and say, *Yet forty days, and Niniveh shall be destroyed*: that was a more awfull sign of desolation, then if they had seen a *blazing star*, hanging over the City, menacing the ruine thereof. Yet when they repented and *reformed* (though it was but an external Reformation) the Lord spared them forty years longer. Ah! *New-England*, wilt thou not doe more then *Niniveh*? Shall there not be so much as an *external Reformation*, of those things that provoke the glorious eyes of Heaven? Will not the haughty daughters of *Sion*, reform their Pride in apparel? Will they have the attire of an harlot? Will they lay out their hair, and wear their false locks, their borders, and towers like *Comets* about their heads? Will they doe so, until God send his arrows from heaven, to smite them down into the Grave, where the dayes of darkness shall be many. And shall there be still such a multitude of *licensed Drinking-houses*, (and Town-dwellers frequenting them) to the shame of *Boston*, and to the infamy of *New-England*, notwithstanding the testimony which God and his servants have given against it? How then shall we think to escape in the day of the Lords anger, if a *Reformation* so much as in these externals, which it is so easy to reform, will not be obtained? O Return Return unto the Lord.

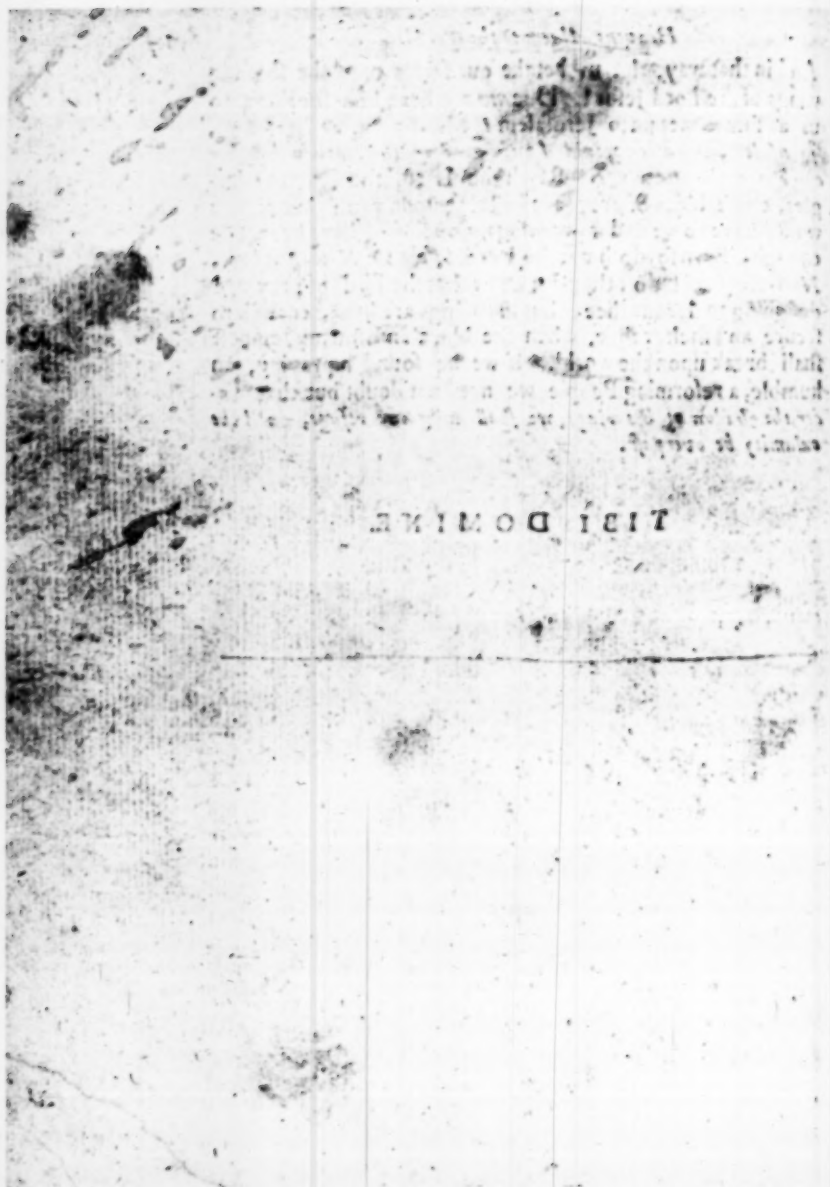
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And in that way, let us betake our selves unto the shading wings of the Lord Jesus. Doe we not hear him speaking to us, as sometimes unto *Jerusalem*? *Mat. 23. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, as an hen her chickens under her wings.* Sayth the Lord, the Romane Eagles, those birds of prey, are hastning upon you: but if you would have come under my wings, you should have been safe enough. Even so, doth not the Lord say, *O New-England, New-England!* dost thou not know that the birds of prey are designing to devour thee? but my wings are broad enough to secure and shelter thee, when the black and stormy tempest shall break upon the world. If we be found a-praying, an humble, a reforming People, we need not doubt but that *under the shadow of his wings, we shall make our refuge, until the calamity be overpast.*

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